

Changes from Appendix H

1. The "Purpose" paragraph is rewritten to describe the supplemental tasks. These are: (a) Screen incoming applications against a set of maps to identify potential issues; (b) Use site specific information to determine whether the issue is relevant to the project at hand; (c) If relevant, use the methodology accompanying the maps or another methodology provided by the applicant or others to assess the effect, if any; (d) Compare the project location to the predicted futures presented by the EIS.
2. A "Background" paragraph is added to describe the application review process and the role of the screening maps. The issues identified through the screening will be given the appropriate weighting and analysis along with the other public interest analysis and other requirements of the Corps permit regulations.
3. The "Format" paragraph is deleted. However, for each issue a narrative has been added to describe the assumptions underlying the map.
4. The "Status" and "Updating" paragraphs are combined into a single "Updates" paragraph and shortened to reflect the commitment to utilize new and site-specific information when available.
5. The "Permit Review" paragraph has been modified to delete the text describing the permit review process. An addition was made for applications that are pending at the date of this document to require that the screening maps be used to ensure some issue is not inadvertently missed. If the issue has already been identified in the normal review process then the work that has already been done will remain and not be re-done. We anticipate that the issues will have already been identified for most pending applications other than those that are at the very beginning of the review process.
6. The "Natural Resource Overlay Map" has been deleted since it was overbroad (covered most of the study area) therefore is not useful to prioritize manpower review resources.
7. The "Cumulative Impacts" paragraph has been rewritten to describe the use of the predicted future maps within the EIS.

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The five maps depict what the landscape may or may not look like in 20+/- years and the accompanying evaluation provides estimates of acres of wetland fill, area of habitat lost, and other issues. If a project is consistent with any one of the five maps, then the potential cumulative effect of this and future projects can be expected to fall within the range of effects described by the EIS. The issues for which screening maps are developed are those for which the potential cumulative effects are particularly within the concern to the Corps. By highlighting these issues, there is an increased assurance that appropriate mitigation actions would be incorporated into the project to reduce and in some cases eliminate that project's contribution to the total potential cumulative effects described by the EIS.

8. An additional sentence has been added to the "Immokalee Reservation, Seminole Tribe of Florida" paragraph to reflect their concern that the Corps is pre-identifying issues within tribal lands.

9. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has developed draft local operating procedures for several species. These include information and maps to screen a project location as well as suggested methodologies for evaluating the effect of the project. The process is described by Attachment A of Enclosure (1). These replace the originally proposed maps and criteria. The maps and evaluations are not inconsistent with those in the EIS, although much refined. Those changed are as follows.

a. Audubon's crested caracara. Both the revisions and the EIS utilize the presence of rangelands and similar habitats in the screening. The revision now provides a "Consultation Area" map based on known and suspected occurrences in south Florida. The original screening map inventoried rangeland throughout the study area, but now the more likely areas would be in the agricultural areas at the northeast portion of the study area. Because the Immokalee Area Study (after the EIS) has produced a more refined land use mapping, Corps staff are referred to that product.

b. Bald eagle. The screening map of known locations was revised with more recent nest reports. The revised criteria emphasize the importance of forested canopy near open water.

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c. Red cockaded woodpecker. Both the revision and the EIS utilize the presence of pinelands in the screening. The screening map attempted to predict locations of colonies by mapping contiguous forested lands that are within dispersal distance of known colonies. This was dropped since does not reflect current practice in consultations.

d. Florida scrub jay. The original screening map inventoried scrub lands throughout the study area, but that map has been replaced by one showing more likely locations. The revision is based on an analysis of occupied and potential habitat throughout south Florida prepared as part of the interim "Guidelines for assessing mitigation needs for the Florida scrub jay." However, site-specific information obtained during the application process will still be reviewed to determine the presence of scrub vegetation, no matter the location.

e. Marshes. Both the revision and the EIS emphasize the importance of short-hydroperiod marshes for Wood stork foraging habitat. The original screening map inventoried freshwater herbaceous marshes based on the South Florida Water Management District land cover mapping, since that was used for the EIS. The revision uses the National Wetland Inventory since that was used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a post-EIS consultation. The revised map also shows the "Core Foraging Area" surrounding the currently occupied rookeries (covers almost the whole EIS study area.) The revisions to the narrative increase the emphasis on assessing the hydroperiod of the wetland and notes that any wetland type, not just freshwater herbaceous, that provides foraging is important to the Wood stork.

10. The "Shorebirds" criteria focused on the Piping plover. Subsequent to the EIS, the FWS has designated critical habitat for this species and this information has been provided in lieu of the original map that showed all of the beaches.

11. The "Florida panther" map and criteria have been revised to reflect recent consultations. A standard local operating procedure has been issued that identifies a nine county area as the "consultation action area" within which panther habitat may be found. Biological Opinions since issuance of the EIS continue to assess project effects on contiguous areas of forested area, consistent with the analysis found in the EIS.

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The U.S. Fish and wildlife Service continues to work on this issue so another revision can be expected soon.

12. The "Water Quality" map and criteria have been completely revised. The originally proposed criteria asked the applicant whether it was practicable to add surface water management features that under the State rules would be expected to provide 95% treatment. This has been replaced by a methodology where the actual nutrient loads in the stormwater runoff would be calculated for the pre- and post- project condition.

13. Several mapped issues have been deleted since they are considered to be less valuable for formal screening.

a. "Strategic Habitat Conservation Area (SHCA) Lands." This still has an immense potential since, being designed to enable prioritization of lands for acquisition, it could also enable the Corps to recognize certain locations as more valuable when evaluating the site plans or proposed compensatory mitigation. However, these products are not being widely used by other programs and therefore our use may result in inconsistency of results.

b. "Wading Bird Rookeries." These mapped locations are based on site-specific observations and so could give a false sense of security using for new sites. Will continue to rely on site-specific observations as part of the normal course of business.

c. "High Proportion Wetland." Due to the importance of uplands, the high proportion of wetland by itself does not indicate a more valued habitat over another site.

d. "Coastal." These locations are obvious from the permit application so a map was only adding work. These vegetation communities already receive high attention.

14. The "Flowway" and "Habitat Fragmentation" sections have been revised for readability and the assumptions used in the map added.

15. "Management of Preserves" and "Public Acquisition Program" have been combined into a "Regionally Significant Natural Resources." This is intended to clarify that the Corps review

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is concerned with assessing the effect of the project on natural resources. The designation/labeling of the land as publicly owned or proposed does not by itself give weight either for or against in the decision whether to issue a permit. The title of the section is taken from the map prepared by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council.